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ABSTRACT

Given that for the past eight years women have constituted the majority of students enrolled in college journalism programs, a study investigated whether women hold the majority of staff and management positions on campus newspapers. Twenty-one schools in five southern and southwestern states were surveyed in 1986 about information concerning campus staffs during the fall of 1985. Results showed that, while women made up 63.2% of the news-editorial majors at the colleges surveyed, they made up only 44% of the editorial staff of the campus newspapers. However, women fared better as top editors on the campus staffs than in any other position examined--10 of the 21 top editors were female. Forty percent of the other editors were female and 45.6% of the reporters were female. Of the 18 schools with faculty advisers, only two advisers were female. Results also showed that women did better at the seven schools where work on the campus newspaper was required for a journalism degree. Findings suggest that college women are more successful than their professional counterparts in newspaper management--the 40% of the college women in management is certainly higher than the 10% of "directing editors" reported by the American Society of Newspaper Editors. (Footnotes are appended.) (NKA)

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THE RATIO OF MEN TO WOMEN
ON SELECTED COLLEGE NEWSPAPER STAFFS
IN FIVE SOUTHWESTERN STATES

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ABSTRACT

Women have outnumbered men as students in journalism schools in the United States since 1977. This study sought to determine how women were faring proportionately on the staffs of selected college newspapers in five Southwestern states: Arizona, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

While women made up 60 percent of all journalism students in the United States in 1985, they made up 63 percent of the news-editorial majors at the 21 schools surveyed. On the newspaper staffs at the 21 schools, however, only 44 percent of the staff members were women. Women fared best in the top editor's position at these schools with 10 of the 21 top editors being women. Forty percent of the other editors positions were held by women, and 45.6 percent of the reporters and 23 percent of the photographers were women.

Only about 10 percent of the newspaper advisers were women at these 21 schools.

THE RATIO OF MEN TO WOMEN ON SELECTED COLLEGE NEWSPAPER STAFFS IN FIVE SOUTHWESTERN STATES

Since 1977 women have outnumbered men as students in United States college journalism programs.¹ Yet, women still lag far behind men in management positions on United States newspapers.²

What about women in management roles on the campus press? With more women than men in journalism schools, are women gaining experience and confidence at being newspaper managers in college? Are there more female staff members on college newspaper staffs than men, and do females hold the majority of management positions on campus newspapers? This study attempts to answer these questions for campus newspapers in five Southwestern states: Arizona, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

The Student Press

While the early history of Journalism education is well documented, little information could be found about the history of the college press.

Forms of the campus paper began though decades before formal journalism education was taught. Mott said college students edited weekly papers filled largely with literary content as early as the turn of the nineteenth century. He suggested that the first campus paper was the *Dartmouth Gazette* founded in 1799. Yale had a paper in 1806 and Harvard by 1810.³ The *Yale News* was the first college daily newspaper. It began in 1878.⁴

No information could be found concerning the ratio of men to women on college newspaper staffs in the past. However, a random sample of 20 high schools which were members of the Texas High School Press Association in 1985 showed that 57 percent of the staff members were females. In addition, 67 percent of the top editors were females but 48 percent of the "other editors" were women. Sixty two percent of the

reporters on the Texas high school papers were women and 46 percent of the photographers were women. Eighty percent of the high school journalism advisers were women.⁵

Journalism Education

While campus papers began early in the nineteenth century, the first proposal for journalism education did not come until 1869 when General Robert E. Lee, then president of Washington College (now Washington and Lee University) suggested young men intending to be journalists could pay for their tuition by working in print shops while pursuing a classical course of study at Washington College. Lee died the next year though without the plan being executed.⁶

Kansas State College (now university) began a course in printing in 1873, and the University of Missouri began teaching journalism classes in 1878.⁷

Martha Louise Rayne established the first school of journalism in the world in Detroit in 1886. Rayne's school was a private one for women, and it could not give formal academic credit. But Rayne's students were taught reporting, writing, literary style and manuscript preparation among other things.⁸

Rayne had worked for newspapers in Chicago and Detroit and had published several books. The *Detroit Tribune* wrote, "Many newspapers pooh-pooh the idea but Mrs. Rayne is a thorough journalist and may do the laughing herself later."⁹

Rayne moved back to Chicago around 1890, but women who worked for her continued the school until 1900.¹⁰

At least eight universities, mainly in the Middle West, were teaching journalism before 1900.¹¹

The University of Missouri began its School of Journalism in 1908 and admitted women since women had already been admitted to the university for three decades. The first class was graduated from the two-year program in 1910. The class consisted of five men and one woman.¹²

By 1910 departments of journalism were organized at four other universities and journalism classes were taught at 12 other colleges including the University of Oklahoma.¹³

According to the 1986 AEJMC directory the first schools or departments of journalism were founded in the five Southwestern states in this study in the following years: Oklahoma 1913, Texas 1914, Louisiana 1925, Arizona 1947, New Mexico 1948.

While women were admitted to most of the early journalism programs, they were accepted only grudgingly.¹⁴ Carl Ackerman, one of the first Columbia University journalism graduates and later dean at Columbia said there was opposition to the admission of women. He said some of the professors had "strong prejudices." Ackerman said one professor, asked about admitting women, had a classic reply, "... no teacher could teach mathematics to a boy if there was a girl in the room and that if a boy could learn mathematics with a girl in the room, he would never grow up to be a man."¹⁵

Beasley reported that while journalism education was open to women, "Women as a group were excluded from serious consideration as managers."

Also, Beasley said women were not given the same assignments as men or that their performance was seen as not being as good as male performance.¹⁶

Ethel M. Colson Brazelton, a Medill School of Journalism lecturer, advised women that male editors said that 30 percent of a newspaper woman's success depended on her making a favorable impression through her dress and social skills.¹⁷ Brazelton's book, *Writing and Editing for Women*, was published in 1927.

Philip Porter and Norval Luxon wrote in 1935 that women were biologically unsuited for reporting because of "nervous temperament." The

authors added, "Most women are incapable of covering police and court news."¹⁸

Despite discouragements women kept attending journalism schools. During World War II, there were more women than men enrolled in journalism programs.¹⁹ After the war men again made up the majority of journalism students, but women began gaining again in the 1960s.

Paul Peterson's annual survey of national journalism enrollments showed 41 percent of all journalism students were women in 1968. By 1977 about 50 percent of all journalism students were women,²⁰ and in the fall of 1985 60 percent of all journalism students were women.²¹

Although there is still a large gender imbalance between female faculty and female students in journalism programs, women have been slowly making gains on journalism faculties too. In 1972 7 to 8 percent of the journalism faculties were women.²² By 1983 the number had increased to about 17 percent.²³

Women as Newspaper Managers

Two studies have provided some demographic information about female newspaper managers.

Sohn reported the average woman newspaper manager is 33 and has a college degree. Over half of the female managers are married and 71 percent are childless.²⁴

Ogan's study done a few years earlier showed that 50 percent of the women managers had fathers who were professionals and over one fourth of the women had mothers who were professionals. Ogan reported the average female manager's age was 42.²⁵

Neither researcher reported information regarding whether or not the female manager had college newspaper experience.

Women seem to be making small gains in numbers in newsroom management positions nationally. A 1977 study reported only 2.6 percent of the "directing editors" of daily newspapers with a circulation of 40,000 or more were women.²⁶

In 1983 the American Newspaper Publishers Association estimated that 38 percent of the American daily press work force were women. Only 4.5 percent of the top level managers were women and 11.5 percent of the mid-level managers were women.²⁷

In January 1986 the *Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors* reported that 10 percent of "directing editors" listed in the 1985 *Editor and Publisher Yearbook* were female.²⁸

And in October 1986 Jean Gaddy Wilson reported that 7 percent of publishers in the United States were women. In news management positions, Wilson found 90 percent of the lifestyle editors were women, but only 2 percent of the sports editors, 8 percent of the photo directors and 9 percent of the editorial page editors were women.²⁹

Wilson noted that since women have been in the majority in journalism education for almost a decade, we should see a dramatic increase in the hiring and promotion of women on daily newspapers. Wilson noted the increase has not yet taken place though.³⁰

The Research Study

This study sought to determine if women are holding the majority of staff positions and management positions on the campus newspapers eight years after women made up the majority of students enrolled in college journalism programs.

Five Southwestern states, Arizona, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas were chosen as a beginning for the study.

Many schools now have more students majoring in public relations, advertising or broadcasting than in news editorial. Thus, the researcher assumed that news-editorial majors would be more likely to work on the campus newspaper than other communications majors. So only schools that reported the male/female ratio by news-editorial sequence were used in this study. Twenty one schools in the five states had reported that break down in the annual survey of journalism majors conducted by Paul

Peterson at Ohio State University.

Those 21 schools, two in Arizona, three in Louisiana, one in New Mexico, three in Oklahoma and 12 in Texas, were surveyed concerning the male/female ratio on the campus newspaper staffs.³¹

If the schools did not respond to the survey mailed them, they were called so that information was obtained from all 21 campuses. The survey was mailed in May 1986 asking for information concerning campus newspaper staffs in the fall of 1985.

The Schools

Five of the 21 schools were private, the rest were state-supported institutions. Twelve of the 21 schools said their campus newspaper operated independently of the journalism program. Of the remaining nine schools only seven said that work on the campus newspaper was required for journalism students. Some advisers explained that even if the program was independent of the journalism program, some classes required written assignments targeted for publication in the campus newspaper. However, the campus editors had the final say about what was used in the campus paper.

Eighteen of the schools said the editor in chief was selected by a publications board, usually made up of students and faculty, but sometimes including media professionals. One school said the editor was elected by the student body, another said the journalism faculty selected the editor and a third school said the adviser selected the editor.

While journalism majors were required to work on the paper at only seven schools, all schools reported that at least 50 percent of the staff members of the campus paper were journalism majors. In fact, 10 of the 21 schools said 90 percent or more of the staff members were journalism majors. Another four schools reported between 80 and 90 percent of the staff were journalism majors, four schools said 70 to 80 percent were journalism majors and three schools said about 50 percent of the staff

consisted of journalism majors.

Peterson's data showed that 63.2 percent of the students in news-editorial sequences at these 21 schools were female (1344) and 36.8 percent were male (783).³² This compared with Peterson's report that 60 percent of all majors nationally were female.³³

The survey did not ask for a breakdown of male and female journalism faculty members at each campus, but 14 of the 21 schools listed faculty members in the 1986 AEJMC directory. A directory count including adjuncts and part-time faculty showed about 20 percent of the faculty members were female.

The Campus Newspaper Staff

While women made up 63.2 percent of the news-editorial majors at these schools, they made up only 44 percent of the editorial staff of the campus newspapers.

Women fared better as top editors on the campus staffs than in any other position examined. Ten of the 21 top editors were female (46 percent). Forty percent of the "other editors" were female and 45.6 percent of the reporters were female. Only 23 percent of the photographers were female.

Of the 21 schools, one reported having no newspaper adviser and two other surveys failed to identify the adviser. Of the other 18 advisers, only two were women. While the top editors at the two schools with female advisers were male, female ratios were higher in total staff, other management positions and photographers than at the other schools as a group. Fifty four percent of the total staff was female, 50 percent of the other editors were female and one third of the photographers were female.

Women seemed to fare better at the seven schools where work on the campus newspaper was required. Men were the top editors at four of the seven schools, but women made up 49 percent of the total staff and held 49 percent of the other management positions. Women also made up 26 percent of the photographers at those schools as compared to 23 percent for

the schools as a group.

The advisers were asked how many applicants had applied for the top editor's position. A total of 48 students were reported applying for the 21 jobs. Twenty of the applicants were female, 28 male. Ten of the 20 female applicants were selected.

Five schools had more than one female applicant. One school had three female applicants and one male applicant (a female was selected editor). Seven schools had no female applicants, and three schools had no male applicants. Two schools did not report the number of applicants. Both had female editors.

One survey question asked if it was difficult to get females to apply for the primary editor's position. Only two surveys said yes even though seven schools had no female applicants. Staff members who said they had no adviser filled out one of the surveys reporting it difficult to get females to apply. The students wrote, "Very few women in print journalism here. Also one female set a bad precedent." According to Peterson's figures, 53 percent of the news-editorial majors were female at that school. At the other school where a male adviser said it was difficult to get females to apply for the top job, 65 percent of the news-editorial majors were women and only one third of the total campus newspaper staff was female.

Some advisers included additional comments that were enlightening or encouraging. One Texas adviser wrote that since 1976-77, six of the past 11 editors had been women. From 1969 to 1976, the editors at that school were all men.

Another Texas adviser from a school with 68 percent women majors and 45 percent female staff members said women were flocking to print journalism. He cited equal treatment, pay and promotion as the reason. He also said the work was interesting and psychologically rewarding if not financially. He also cited a number of role models for women in the newspaper field. Finally, he added that "top males during the educational process are steered away leaving it a better place for promotion than professions where top money-seekers head."

A third Texas adviser said that while his school had a male editor in 1985-86, the 1986-87 editor was a minority female and that two of the other top three positions were held by women and that the sports editor was also

a woman.

A fourth Texas adviser wrote that in 1985-86 all major student leaders including the campus newspaper editor were female.

In phone conversations several other advisers commented they had had more female editors other years.

Discussion

Are there more women than men on campus newspaper staffs now, and do women hold the majority of the management positions? The answer is obviously no for these 21 schools in 1985-86.

However, college women do seem to be faring better than their professional counterparts in newspaper management. The 40 percent of the college women in management slots is certainly better than the 10 percent of "directing editors" reported by the ASNE for 1985.

But will the dramatic increase in the hiring and promotion of women on daily newspapers take place as Wilson says it should? Since there is no data to which the college information can be compared, that is difficult to predict.

It does seem puzzling that women majoring in news-editorial journalism are not taking advantage of the campus newspaper as a way to gain experience. The fact that about 90 percent of the advisers said they had no problems getting women to apply for staff positions is surprising too considering the gender imbalance between the news-editorial majors and newspaper staffers.

Advisers have been trained regarding affirmative action and stereotypes and probably would never respond as the student who wrote, "One female set a bad precedent." However, the student's response seems to echo the early male journalism educators who thought women couldn't do the job. It also seems in line with the approximately 50 percent of female faculty members in a 1983 study who said sexual discrimination against journalism students was a problem to some extent but that the discrimination was subtle.³⁴

Why are "top males" steered away during the "educational process" because of low pay? What advice is given females on the same subject?

Would the percentages of female staffers be higher if more advisers were female or if more journalism faculty members were female? Past studies have said that women have been discouraged from management jobs because they have not had good role models and they have not received adequate counseling from male faculty members.³⁵ Also, the Texas high schools with 80 percent female advisers certainly had higher ratios of female staff members than the colleges.³⁶

Educational researchers Myra and David Sadker say both male and female faculty members at all levels treat females differently than males. The Sadkers say in the "boys will be boys" tradition, teachers encourage boys to speak up and girls to set back and listen. The Sadkers say both men and women faculty members need to be trained to treat male and female students equally.³⁷

The study raises several questions. Are campus newspaper staffs nationally still dominated by males? Does experience on the college newspaper lead to greater probability of newspaper management in the professional world? Are women encouraged to join college newspaper staffs and to seek management positions on the staffs?

We need to be asking professional women newspaper managers if they had experience on their campus newspapers. We also should examine what the ratio of men to women is in media management classes taught in journalism schools. Additional research needs to be done in all these areas to answer the questions raised in this study.

NOTES

¹Paul V. Peterson, "Enrollment Surges Again, Increases 7 Per Cent to 70,601," *Journalism Educator* (January 1979), p.3.

²Ardyth B. Sohn, "Goals and Achievement Orientations of Women Newspaper Managers," *Journalism Quarterly* 61 (Autumn 1984), pp. 600 - 605.

³Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1962), p. 206.

⁴Joseph N. Kane, ed., *Famous First Facts* (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1981), p. 426.

⁵Sherrie Early and Mary K. Sparks, "The Ratio of Males to Females on Texas High School Newspaper Staffs," a working paper, Texas Woman's University, 1986.

⁶Mott, p. 406.

⁷DeForest O'Dell, *The History of Journalism Education in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Teachers College, 1935), pp. 16-45.

⁸James S. Bradshaw, "Mrs. Rayne's School of Journalism," *Journalism Quarterly* 60 (Fall 1983), pp. 513-517.

⁹*Detroit Tribune*, July 17, 1886, p. 4, as quoted in Bradshaw, pp. 513-517.

¹⁰Bradshaw, pp. 513-517.

¹¹Maurine H. Beasley, "Women in Journalism Education: The Formative Period, 1908 - 1930," a paper presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication convention, Memphis, Tenn., August 1985, p. 5.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁵Text of speech, "The Inside of a Newspaper Should Be Like the Inside of the Home," given on June 6, 1979, Box 163, Carl W. Ackerman papers, Library of Congress as quoted in Beasley, p. 11.

¹⁶Beasley, pp. 12 - 14.

¹⁷Ethel M. Colson Brazelton, *Writing and Editing for Women* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1927), pp. 3-8, 190.

¹⁸Phil W. Porter and Norval N. Luxon, *The Reporter and the News* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1935), p. 8, as quoted in Beasley, p. 19.

¹⁹Jean Gaddy Wilson, "Women in the Newspaper Business," *presstime*, (October 1986), p. 31.

²⁰Peterson, p. 3.

²¹Peterson, "Enrollments Up 5 Percent in 1985 after Four Years of No Growth," *Journalism Educator* (Spring 1986), pp. 4-6.

²²Nancy W. Sharp, Judy VanSlyke Turk, Edna F. Einsiedel, Linda Schamber, Sharon Hollenback, *Faculty Women in Journalism and Mass Communications: Problems and Progress* (Syracuse: Gannett Foundation, 1985), p. 3.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 61.

²⁴Sohn, pp. 600-605.

²⁵Christine L. Ogan, Charlene J. Brown and David H. Weaver, "Characteristics of Managers of Selected U. S. Daily Newspapers," *Journalism Quarterly* 56 (Winter 1979), pp. 803-809.

²⁶*Media Report to Women*, May 1, 1977, p. 5.

²⁷Sohn, p. 600.

²⁸As quoted in Wilson, p. 33.

²⁹Wilson, p. 32.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 37.

³¹The 21 schools were Arizona University, Arizona State University, Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge), Loyola University, Southeastern Louisiana University, New Mexico State University, Central State University (Oklahoma), University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University, Abilene Christian University (Texas), Prairie View A & M University (Texas), Southwest Texas State University, Texas A & I University, Texas A & M University, University of Texas - Arlington, University of Texas - Austin, Texas Christian University, University of Texas - Permian Basin, Texas Tech University, Texas Wesleyan University and Trinity University (Texas).

³²Letter from Paul Peterson, May 16, 1986.

³³Peterson, "Enrollments Up 5 Percent in 1985 after Four Years of No Growth," *Journalism Educator* (Spring 1986), pp. 4-6.

³⁴Sharp, Turk, Einsiedel, Schamber, Hollenback, p. 19.

³⁵Matilda Butler and William Paisley, *Women and the Mass Media* (University of Wisconsin, Madison: Human Sciences Press, 1980), pp. 242-250.

³⁶Early and Sparks, a working paper.

³⁷David and Myra Sadker, "Sexism in the Classroom: From Grade School to Graduate School," *Phi Delta Kappan*, March 1986, pp. 358-360.